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ABSTRACT

Suggestions are offered for faculty development and evaluation activities that can aid teachers' understanding and growth. Teachers can benefit from classroom observation feedback from other teachers who have been trained to appreciate the different kinds of cognitive processes used in the classroom. Observing teachers can record the pattern of interaction in the classroom, and if a teacher's classroom goals are not being met, faculty development activities can also help in analysis and planning. This approach relies on a teacher's self-judgment, based on recognition of dissonance between intent and accomplishment and the desire to improve instruction. Faculty development might also encourage teachers to increase their knowledge about the teaching process in general, assist them in producing learning materials, and design courses and evaluation instruments. Control of faculty development activities by faculty is needed to promote faculty acceptance and trust. The controlling group should be drawn from different divisions. Since administrative support is necessary to carry out faculty development and evaluation activities, administrator development activities are also needed. Some particular faculty development programs at the author's institution are cited. (SW)

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FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

JOSEPH SANDERS

In the following remarks I'll be speaking to other people whose graduate education did not prepare them to teach, who may in fact have been explicitly warned against spending too much time preparing for their duties as teaching assistants lest their own graduate studies suffer. I'll be speaking to people who recognize not merely how lucky they are to have a teaching job at all but how unlikely it is that they'll ever be able to change jobs. And I'll be speaking, above all, to people who have been forced to turn away from their primary devotion to literary study toward the amorphous, chancy job of teaching literacy not simply because that's where the jobs are, but because that's what the students need. For that's where I find myself too. Outrage won't help us. Changing the way new teachers are prepared won't help us.

What will? How can we gain the satisfaction of doing well at this difficult but vital task?

That's what I'll try to talk about, by discussing faculty development as a means to that end.

Basically, I'll attempt to give you the kind of survey that I would have found useful three years ago when a faculty development committee was formed at my school and I was elected chairman.

One problem in approaching "faculty development" is that the term's definition is hard to pin down, for it seems to mean different things to different people. Actually, the problem is that it can mean many things to one person; the confusion results from the variety of avenues faculty development can offer towards its goal.

One large area of activities labeled faculty development, for example,

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includes activities that teachers traditionally have been willing to take part in and schools have been willing to fund: sabatical leaves, attendence at conferences, research projects, etc. Certainly these can genuinely help a teacher develop if they maintain the excitement with which he considers his subject.

Today, however, "faculty development" usually means more than these familiar activities. Assuming the teacher's adequate grasp of subject matter, current faculty development is concerned with what happens in his classroom. In the debate on how to improve teaching-learning systematically, faculty development concerns usually have been grouped under three headings: first is personal development--affecting the way a teacher personally approaches teaching; then comes instructional development--affecting the way he conducts his class, the way he works with a class; and finally there is organizational development--affecting the way he is influenced by his institution. Actually, these aspects of teaching are very hard to separate, and most faculty development programs are forced to take an eclectic approach; they may first approach a problem from one angle but often are forced to consider all aspects of the situation to attempt a resolution.

As an example of how faculty development can operate, let's consider the most traumatic, tangled issue possible: faculty evaluation. There seems general administrative agreement that teachers should be "evaluated"; after all, these are lean times financially, the public demands "accountability," and so on. However, evaluations differ in source, in form, and most vitally, in purpose. Even if a teacher accepts the necessity of evaluation in theory, the doubt lingers--how valid is this evaluation? And how will the results be used? This uncertainty naturally leads to fear and often to active or passive resistence.

Faculty development seems to have some natural connection with faculty evaluation--though not necessarily in the sense used by the Southern dean who proudly explained to a visiting instructional development specialist, "Why, we evaluate all our faculty, and then we fire the ones with low scores. That develops the rest of the faculty." Real faculty development is not concerned with getting rid of "bad" teachers but with helping concerned teachers develop their abilities. This difference in purpose dictates differences in procedure, to produce information that can be useful. If one is turning away from evaluation leading to an absolute judgment and instead turning toward analysis aiding understanding and growth, he will be concerned with a different aspect of teaching and will measure it differently. Student evaluations, the most commonly used evaluative tool, will be only part of the process leading to increased self-knowledge, since most of them are retrospective, looking back over the total experience of a class. More emphasis will be given to observation by peers, fellow teachers trained to appreciate the different kinds of cognitive processes used in the classroom. They also can distinguish and record the pattern of interaction in the classroom--what percentage of time does the teacher or do the students spend in structuring the period's work? in soliciting responses? in actually responding? in reacting? By sitting in the classroom or by studying a videotape, a trained observer can analyze the same class from different perspectives. As a result, a teacher can receive not merely a rather general boost or knock but a detailed analysis of what actually happens in classroom experience. Then the teacher can compare this to what he should have prepared before the observation: his own estimate of how his purposes for the class should be fulfilled through the combination of pedagogical moves. For example, if I expect my students to be able to analyze

the structure of an argumentative essay by the last week of a class, I must decide whether they will gain more skill by working together in small groups or by interacting with me in a large group. If I choose the large group, I still must decide how much to encourage comments, how much to draw out comments and emphasize all or portions of them and how soon to shut off random reactions. However, if I have "covered" the number of essays I planned and made sure that the pertinent comments have been made, why aren't students showing more perception in class? Any why do their papers do no more than list facts? I might an go on for years in bafflement. However, if I look at the report from the faculty development observer and discover that what I wanted to happen--perhaps even believed was happening--in the classroom was not what the observer recorded, then I must account for the difference. Was the observer an inperceptive dolt? Or did I in fact discourage student participation by asking vague questions, by rushing to answer before a student could, by failing to listen to a student's response? Did I ask verbally for individual perception but at the same time signal that I would do the work? If I still consider my original intentions valid, I now have a better idea of why they aren't working out, why the classes drag on so miserably, why the papers are so godawful. Perhaps, seeing all this, I can begin to make realistic plans to improve. And to help me analyze and plan, I can turn again to faculty development.

This kind of evaluation relies on a teacher's self-judgment, based on his recognition of dissonance between intent and accomplishment. It assumes that I, the teacher, will be impelled to use the results to make my teaching more satisfying. At the very least, now I can ask myself real, specific questions, not simply get more and more nervous and defensive. This may not excuse me

from judgmental evaluation, in the long haul, but it will ease my mind considerably by preparing me for it. Certainly, even if evaluation must be part of a judgmental process, not to use faculty development to give adversely-evaluated people the solid information and aid they need is monumentally, brutally wasteful.

At my school, there does not yet exist sufficient trust to offer the kind of observation I have described. However, our faculty development committee has discussed the system with people from a nearby school (where it is widely used) and we are beginning to inform teachers at my school of this possible service; even doing that has made me much more sensitive to what goes on in my classroom. I have asked myself the questions I just listed; I still ask them, along with many others, daily. So I appreciate that opening oneself to change is a nervous and uncertain process. However, it still beats one alternative I have seen: sneering at students for their lack of background and shouting at them for failing to respond in class.

In this and other ways, faculty development can make the process of self-development less difficult by making consultating services readily available, by patiently encouraging people to use them, and by helping people, through advice and material assistance, actually to make desired changes.

With this in mind, let me list a few more possible applications of the concept of faculty development.

Within the overall heading of personal development, as defined earlier, faculty development might encourage us teachers to broaden our interests; we are willing to take courses in our specialty--why not in some other field altogether? It might help us increase our knowledge about the teaching process in general; we may distrust the jargon of educationists, but we should be

willing to examine concepts that can help us as educators. It might encourage us to develop teaching techniques, both traditional and innovative. It might help us better understand interpersonal dynamics. It might help us understand better our students' learning styles.

Meanwhile, instructional development could assist teachers in producing learning materials for classes. For that matter, it could help us design the courses in the first place. It could help us diagnose problems early and accurately, and it could assist in the design of evaluation instruments for students.

And eventually many faculty development projects will at least touch the area of organizational development. A teacher is unlikely to develop if his school is hostile or utterly uninterested in development. One thing faculty development should consider, thus, <u>is</u> the development of administrators and staff. We forget that administrators have had as little preparation for their roles as have teachers. Furthermore, if understanding interpersonal relations can be important between student and teacher it can be equally important between teacher and administrator. Working with administrators, trying to break down barriers and increase understanding so that other developments can proceed--all these are legitimate concerns of faculty development. And, finally, institutional policies may have to be formed or changed.

This has not been an exhaustive checklist, much less an exhaustive description. Other activities may be appropriate depending on the needs of a particular teacher for a particular class at a particular institution. It may have struck you, listening, that a fair number of these activities are already conducted informally by individuals scattered about your school. That's true. Many teachers already <u>do</u> faculty development activities by

themselves; it's altogether natural to change through classroom experience and research. Faculty development helps to focus those energies and aid that process. Unfortunately, it's extremely easy to be diverted or discouraged when you're working by yourself. You don't know who to talk to, and no one seems to have much time to offer detailed advice. Faculty development can try to make concerned people more conscious of the possibilities for deliberate development, and it can try to make the system more flexible so that they can explore these possibilities. It is not intended, ever, to force teachers into a single mold; it is intended to help them develop their own way, to their own most honest satisfaction.

If you find this an attractive, though still rather nebulous, aim, how can you pursue it? Notice that I have thus far avoided suggesting exactly how faculty development operates; again, it is difficult to imagine one form for an evolving movement. However, I can offer some practical suggestions based on reading and personal experience.

How does faculty development appear at a school? Usually with at least some administrative encouragement. And that is valuable, for reasons I'll get to in a moment. However, in a number of the schools doing something about faculty development, the original push came when faculty members who were concerned as individuals decided they could do more as a more formal group. At the very least, viable faculty development activity depends on faculty acceptence, and I suggest that it should be faculty-controlled from the start. Of course cooperation with the administration is desireable, but faculty members tend to give trust to a faculty group. I stunned the administrator who sits with our committee as a non-voting member when I commented that I would consider it my duty to burn files before I'd turn them over for punitive

review. But I think this stance is necessary. If you request a faculty member to open himself honestly and admit to weaknesses in the way he approaches or performs his job, you must be able to assure him that the admission won't be used to punish him later.

To safeguard interests of diverse groups, the controlling group or faculty should itself be diverse. An all-college committee should be drawn from different divisions--and reflect their necessarily competitive interests. Accomplishing anything with this group can be difficult, but it's a necessary challenge.

Assuming that a somewhat autonomous and diverse group has been formed, the next task is to build trust of the faculty development activities. For various reasons, faculty members tend to be wary of anyone who encourages them to change--especially if the change is in an area about which they are genuinely sensitive. So I'd suggest beginning in a very non-threatening way. One way is by offering grants to faculty members who want to do something related to instructional development that doesn't fit into their departmental budget. The committee at my school, in two years of grant-giving, has reached approximately 25% of the faculty. Subjects of grants have included the preparation of an interdisciplinary criminology and speech class, planning a schoolwide honors program, putting together an audiovisual unit for an introductory biology class and another one for introductory social studies, establishment of a learning center in a chemistry lab, acquisition of several gangster films of the '40s so our film expert could prepare a unit on the film noir, and others. Also, since our committee was the only source of travel money last year due to a budget crunch, we made it possible for people to attend meetings such as the regional conferences on English in the Two-Year College.

Also, it's important to remember that the purpose of faculty development is to do things with people, rather than for or to them. From the beginning, our committee tried to find out what the faculty really was concerned with, so we could offer genuinely interesting activities. We have offered sessions during the school year dealing with cognitive style mapping, grading by learning contract, small group instruction, and classroom observation, among others. Almost all these programs been conducted by faculty members at the school, and they have drawn a small but highly interested turnout. On a larger scale, at the end of the last two summers, we have prepared a two and a half day, off-campus conference attended by all faculty, administrators, and support staff. For the faculty sessions, we have put together the program by polling the faculty for topics of interest, trying to balance numbers on a schedule, and identifying people at the school who could plan a session that would do something of value with the topic. Our 1978 conference program included topics like "Developing a Personal Growth Program," "Diagnostic Testing," "Measurable Objectives," "Handicapped Students," "Student Evaluation," "Cross-Discipline Teaching/Cooperation," "Honors Program," and others. It concluded with a general session on "Communications," a massive sore point at all levels in our school.

The administrative support I mentioned earlier is necessary to carry out these activities. The school supplies money for the faculty development grants, and it makes possible programs like the off-campus conference. In addition, I can forsee that the committee will need to pressure the administration for a means to give released time to people working on faculty development grants--and to members of the committee itself. The school's administration thus has an ultimate, exterior veto on the committee's ac-

tivities; however, it is unlikely that the veto could be used while the committee really is functioning.

I seem to have shifted from a discussion of how faculty development might be worked to a description of how faculty development is working at my school. Let me, therefore, close with a few personal observations.

First of all, an observation about this year's off-campus conference. Organizing any such affair is a big test of the committee; this year's conference turned out to be more than that. Due to a long-simmering feud between faculty and administration, contract negotiations had not been completed when the conferences convened. Accordingly, the leadership of our faculty association looked around for something to do to show its displeasure and siezed on the conference as the handiest object. Faculty were advised either to boycott the conference or--when many people showed reluctance to go that far--to turn it into a liberated conference on strike tactics, etc. That first day, I felt like I had been hit by a truck. All the committee members did. The next day, however, something very interesting happened. Faculty members began to ask--spontaneously, not at the urging of the committee--"Why can't we have the program?" And the people who had been scheduled to present sessions decided that, by God, they were going to after all; they began posting notices in the halls to invite people to attend. So we did, ultimately have much of the program presented to lively participants. That this could happen, in extremely unpromising circumstances, illustrates the natural vitality of faculty development. The topics for the conference drew on real interest and concern; consequently, the faculty made sure that they were considered.

Another personal observation. Looking back on my time with the committee, I think I have changed for the better. Participation in faculty development activities has increased my openness and sensitivity to human

needs. And that, remember, is part of the overall purpose of faculty development itself.

Finally, a reminder. The suggestions and examples I have offered do not exhaust the possibilities of faculty development. It is a movement, not a rigid mold, and it lurches along unevenly in response to the developing needs of the faculty. But it still is a task to welcome, and without becoming unduly messianic, I still would compare its role to that of the Salvation Army as Shaw describes it in his preface to Major Barbara:

> praying, but praying only refreshment, for strength to fight, and for needful MONEY . . .; preaching, but not preaching submission; daring ill-usage and abuse, but not putting up with more of it than is inevitable; and practicing what the world will let them practice, including soap and water, color and music. There is danger in such activity; and where there is danger there is hope.

We know there are dangers to our accomplishment as teachers; we see them around us and feel them within us. But faculty development at least offers a genuine ray of hope.

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